

AMERICAN MUSIC TEACHER

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MAY - JUNE, 1952

AMERICAN MUSIC TEACHER

Published by Music Teachers National Association

Vol. I No. 5

MAY-JUNE, 1952

\$3.00 a year

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From the Editor

JUST as corporation stock holders receive reports from the companies in which they have a financial interest, so the members of the Music Teachers National Association should receive a report on the accomplishments of the Association. Of course, the simile can not be carried to a complete conclusion. In the one case, that of the stock holder, an individual may buy stock, and not be connected with that specific industry in any capacity whatsoever. In the case of MTNA each member carries some responsibility for the success of the Association.

What have the members of MTNA accomplished within the past ten months? Briefly, the following:

The Southwestern Division comprised of the states of Arkansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas was established in February, 1952 in Dallas, Texas.

The Theory-Composition Section of MTNA was also formed in Dallas in February, 1952.

Membership in the Association for 1951-52 is more than double that for 1950-51.

Nine additional state music teachers' associations have affiliated with MTNA within the past ten months, three of them on a 100% basis.

Another state music teachers' association has recently petitioned for affiliation with MTNA, and still another has announced its intentions of petitioning for affiliation on a 100% basis some time this summer. With one exception, all presently existing state music teachers' associations are now affiliated with MTNA, or have
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American Music Teacher is published five times a year. Issues are dated:
September-October, November-December, January-February, March-April, and May-June

Communications to AMERICAN MUSIC TEACHER should be addressed to:
S. Turner Jones, 17 West 71st Street, New York 23, N. Y.

PRESENTING:

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Jeannette Cass

MANY MTNA members are unaware of the fact that Student Membership is available in the Association for any bona fide college, university, conservatory, or studio student. At the recent National Convention, plans were formulated by the Executive Committee for an intensive promotion of this phase of the work of MTNA, as it is felt that MTNA can make a valuable and lasting contribution to the improvement of music teaching through its encouragement of and aid to the future members of the profession. This plan has been developing for some time within the Association and is now ready for full presentation to our members.

The writer has undertaken to act as Chairman of Student Membership, and with a committee of private teachers and those in school positions, plans have been made for the launching of an active program immediately.

The aims of this student organization are:

(1) To interest all music students who are studying with private teachers by: (a) keeping them actively interested in music participation as performers whether individually or in groups, such as orchestras, bands, ensembles, and: (b) training them better to appreciate good music, maintaining their interest in playing good recordings, attending concerts and listening to good music on radio and television.

(2) To interest all college students who aim to teach music privately or in classes, to awaken an interest in teaching and help to raise the standards of the music teaching profession by obtaining more and better trained teachers in the field, especially in small towns and rural communities.

We have made an excellent beginning. The Charter Chapter of MTNA Student Membership is located at the University of Georgia,

in Athens, Georgia. This is an active group of fifty students who are following a program that is proving to be of great benefit and interest to them, according to a recent letter. Several other student chapters in various parts of the country are now in the process of being formed. We also have a goodly number of student members who are not affiliated with any group. Already there have been several inquiries from schools regarding the methods of organizing.

The private studio teacher will be especially interested in this project as it is aimed at keeping the student interested throughout the year, and will help to keep the student informed concerning music interests of other students throughout the country. It is felt that having his students identified with a national association student group will lend added prestige to the private studio teacher's standing. We feel that the private teacher will be able to contribute much to this plan, and in turn the plan can be of great benefit to the teacher.

The core of our Student Membership will be the Student News section of *AMERICAN MUSIC TEACHER*, appearing for the first time in this issue. In this section, devoted exclusively to our student members, we shall print articles by students and about students; there will be reports of chapters and their problems and projects; there will be announcements of special interest to students; there will be facilities for an exchange of ideas on all aspects of music that interest and intrigue the student, such as reactions to music problems of today, courses that have been enjoyed, records that are well-liked.

Supplementing the Student News will be various chapters in private studios and colleges, which will furnish the vital and personal impetus so necessary to a well-developed organization. Already it is evident that the courses these chapters will follow will be many and varied. We have found some collegiate groups are interested in meeting once a month to discuss some of the prob-

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MTNA Student Chapter One, located at the University of Georgia. Standing, second row from bottom, left, is the chapter's sponsor, Dr. Hugh Hodgson, head of the Department of Music and former member of MTNA Executive Committee.

FOR some forty years the serious composer has been preoccupied with the problem of language or idiom. We may well judge that this concern with language or idiom is in fact the chief characteristic of the era we know as that of "modern music". It appears, on examination, to be the single phenomenon that embraces the otherwise bewildering diversity of practices which "modern music" presents.

A general acceptance of at least the elements of the art of musical composition is to be found in earlier periods and circumstances. The handling of tone relations does not differ essentially in the music of J. S. Bach, of Handel, of Scarlatti, and of Rameau, to cite the leaders of one generation of musical activity. And this likeness of approach to a basic musical language, which may be termed a common practice, existed over and above any individual leanings or stylistic mannerisms of these composers.

Today, as we are well aware, no single grammar of musical composition can be said to exist, in the sense of a universal acceptance by the many composers who merit our attention. Composers today differ from each other not only in style, or emphasis, or effectiveness of utterance. They differ very largely in their initial assumptions as to how musical tones are to be put in order. It results that the first question we are impelled to ask about the work of a composer is, what system does he use? Only then may we hope for some orientation to his music, or at least gain a hint as to his objectives.

Systems

The current systems are numerous, not to say abundant. Particularly during the 'twenties, it was the vogue for a composer to have a system all his own. Many of these systems were, to be sure, more verbal than musical in origin, and were neither conceived nor received as responsible contributions to art. Taking as their cue an assumed multiplicity of systems, many keen young people made sport with contrariness, with irrational fantasies, with slick substitutes for thought, with blatantly shocking antics and distortions, in a word with any arbitrary unconventionality that would attract momentary attention, under the bold motto of "why not?"

FOLK IDIOM VS. SYNTHETIC LANGUAGE FOR THE COMPOSER

Norman Cazden

If we forbear to describe these irresponsible systems, so frequently abandoned after a single opus or even after a mere manifesto, it is out of charity and humor, and because we have no sustaining interest in the revelations of second-rate genius. Our concern is with the more serious and profound changes of musical idiom that continue to exert an influence on present directions of musical thought, that have developed into schools of composition, that have had at least staying-power, if not the allegiance of more than a few zealous disciples.

Yet the systems and idioms of our "modern music" that we are compelled to respect, even if we are reluctant to accept, have this in common among themselves and with their lesser reflections, that they exhibit the same primary concern with language forms, that they all relate to the manner of musical expression and not its matter. A "system" is to be defined as an embracing technique of composition, not as an embracing purpose of composition. Its precepts deal with how musical tones shall be organized, not to what ends they shall be organized. It results that the supreme achievement of a system is its inner logic, its self-consistency, the perfection of its synthesis of musical elements. The systems have, therefore, the characteristics usually associated with language forms. They provide a grammar, a syntax, a vocabulary, a scheme of spelling and even an alphabet all their own. They do not of themselves bring about a literature in that language.

Now such a synthetic language, usually devised by a composer and taught by his disciples, may show

certain advantages over ordinary or conventional languages. Its premises are reasonable and known, rather than lost in the past, and they fit together in convincing fashion. The typical synthetic language, let us say the twelve-tone system, seems to take account of all the primary elements of music. It regulates the selection of tones, their arrangement and ordering, their progression, their simultaneous combinations, their roles in larger patterns and sections. And if this particular system is not a clear guide for the rhythmic and dynamic aspects of tones, for their sonorous values or for their manner of performance, a sufficient body of music exists in which these elements are stylized. Careful rules have been worked out and illustrated with models, and definite prohibitions are stated, particularly those that guard the consistency of plan and those that demarcate the peculiarities of the system from older practices. While rigorous adherence to the rules is not to be expected from composers, who are subject to some of the failings of human beings, the ideal is made explicit in theoretical treatises and critical analyses, so that Schönberg himself was accused of departures from his announced principles, and Hindemith has been induced to revise some of his earlier works.

Whatever weaknesses we may discover in a synthetic language or system of music, poor logic is not among them. Some systems call upon the over-worked science of acoustics as their infallible proof. Hindemith compares the "electronic flux of tones and their overtones" to the law of gravity, the quarter-tone enthusiasts

point with glee to the eleventh harmonic of the French horn, while it is demonstrated in mathematical terms that the ordinary major triad is a polytonal structure, whether we like it or not. Other systems, while granting certain positive values in the probings of acoustical phenomena, make of musical language an achievement of the sovereign mind and the iron will of the composer, who forces musical tones to obey his creative impulses. Thus Schönberg accepts the harmonic series as providing an interesting range of the possible manipulations of tones, but it is his own controlling vision which decrees that a tone in an established series of twelve may occur in any register, preferably a distant one; while Hába declares the composer a master of his material medium rather than its servant, and arrives at the psychological necessity of quarter-tone construction by means of a rigorous if mystical communion.

Logic

It matters not, from the view-point of pure logic, whether the synthetic language or system claims a foundation in the physical sciences or in the inner searchings of the soul. For there is an infinite multiplicity of possible logics, just as there is an infinite number of mathematical dimensions, and it is not a requirement of pure logic or of pure mathematics that the premises correspond to natural existence as we know it. We can be as logical about fictions as about proven facts, indeed more so, and the high intent of the resolute composer-theorist need not be thwarted by the lesser criteria of the real world. For a pure theory need not inquire whether a principle be true, but only whether, if it were true, such-and-such must follow.

Let us confess that, taken at their best, no pure theory of a synthetic musical language can be demolished on logical grounds. There is room for any number of mutually exclusive systems of organizing tones, and if they but succeed in including among their axioms the important elementary materials of music, their logical justifications are unanswerable. We may wonder why, with so abstract and timeless a proof, they should all crop up precisely in our own era. But if we are slow to perceive their initial premises and modes of operation, or to appreciate their

NOTICE TO ALL MTNA MEMBERS

Correct Address—The National Office makes the urgent request that all members inform the Executive Secretary immediately upon moving to a new address, in order that all issues of *AMERICAN MUSIC TEACHER* may be received on time. Some members have failed to do this, thus depriving themselves of the magazine and also tripling the unit mailing cost. Help us to give you the best possible service by keeping us informed.

National Membership—Although the new membership year in MTNA does not commence until September 1, provisions have been made whereby dues received after June 1 will be credited to the new 1952-53 membership year. Therefore, all those who wish to remit dues now or at any time during the summer months are invited to do so. New membership cards will be mailed upon receipt of dues. Members in non-affiliated states please send dues of \$3.00 to the National Office; members in affiliated states send dues of \$2.00 to your State Association.

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revelations of the music of the future, we attest only our own insensitivity to genius, and prove ourselves obtuse and unworthy.

But there is a ground other than the logical on which we may question seriously the validity of the best founded of synthetic musical languages, and this is the ground of history. For, though they have dealt with all the technical aspects of musical construction, though they may be rooted in the ancient mysteries of number or in the perturbations of the sovereign unconscious, the synthetic systems either omit the criteria of human society and its history from consideration, or they distort them irretrievably. Thus the pure theories may indeed refer to an ideal mode of music, they may be proper to the music of the angels or to the resounding harmonies of the spheres. But precisely in that degree these systems are entirely removed from the realities of human life on earth. We can, beyond doubt, escape both time and space, and indulge in a marvellously free play of tones that is literally out of this world, but only on pain of removing all reference to real people, only by achieving a total vacuity of human meaning.

The art of music does not begin with the tone, as the system-builders have uniformly stated. Music is first and foremost an activity of people. Its reason for being is not a self-powered oscillation of molecules, but rather its role as an expression of human impulse, as an accompaniment of social living, as a means of communication. In the course of their history, human beings have evolved musical languages, each peculiar to the particular period and culture area in which it arose. Only by its setting in the framework of a given human society at a given stage of its history does a system of ordering musical tones gain validity, that is, meaning and expressive power. A human musical system, like a language system in this respect can not have a real and positive reference outside of this setting in time and space, just as there are no human beings in isolation or in the abstract, but only real individuals living in a particular region at a particular time.

Usage

It is characteristic of historically developed systems, whether of verbal language or of musical construction,

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THE INTERSTATE MUSIC COUNCIL AND CERTIFICATION

by Hyman I. Krongard

THE issue of certification of the private music teacher is taking its rightful place beside the other issues of the day concerned with the advancement of education. In a period of intense examination and evaluation of present educational principles and practices the important role of the private teacher of music—Mr. William Schuman calls him “basic,” and recently said that the musical culture of the nation depends on him—must inevitably be considered. In spite of the tremendous strides which have been made by the public schools in music teaching, the private teacher is still the principal dispenser of musical knowledge through the medium of the private music lesson.

From this viewpoint, the private

teacher engaged in a widespread social-service deserves status and recognition commensurate with his responsibility, and the community deserves the same type of protection it enjoys with other highly specialized services, namely, certification and accreditation.

To achieve these and other objectives the Interstate Music Teachers Council has been organized and established. It is now made up of delegates from seven private music teachers organizations in the metro-

politan area of New York. These seven organizations are: Associated Music Teachers League, Inc., Brooklyn Music Teachers Guild, Music Educators Association of New Jersey, Music Teachers Association of Northern New Jersey, Music Class Forum of New York, Piano Teachers Congress of New York, and the Violin, Viola, and Violoncello Teachers Guild.

A few words about the more than seven-hundred teachers who com-

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Amy Olmsted Welch, pianist and organist, Editor of the Oregon MUSIC NEWS, Past-President of Oregon MTA. She was in great part responsible for the success of the Western Division convention last summer.

NEW MEMBERS OF MTNA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



William S. Newman, Associate Professor of Music and Chairman of Instruction in Piano, University of North Carolina. Noted as pianist, lecturer and musicologist. Chairman of Senior Piano Committee of MTNA.



Herbert Gould, Past-President of Missouri MTA, basso-cantante with wide experience in concert, oratorio and opera. Now on the faculty of the University of Missouri.

WHEN AND HOW TO BEGIN TECHNIC

by Florence Fender Binkley

IN A recent piano clinic, when teaching methods for the beginning and early grade student were being discussed, a teacher asked, "When and how do you start technic with the beginner?" To the "when" part of the question, the answer was, "At the very first lesson," but the "how" part of the question needed a bit of explaining.

Defining technic as "Key finding and key sounding in time and with ease," let us begin with the part which deals "with ease." If the student is going to be at ease while learning to play, he must learn how to sit—alert, poised, and balanced. This condition is quite different from the general concept of sitting comfortably and relaxed. For my own small beginners I coined the phrases "sitting light" for poise and alertness, and "sitting heavy" for the slump or relaxed condition. The student should sit forward on the chair or bench, preferably a chair, with the feet on the floor. The very small student will be in a semi-standing position. The right leg should be extended so that the right foot will be somewhat forward of the left foot. This position should create a sense of balance in the body so that the student could arise quickly without preparation or tension, should he be asked to do so. Since no two students are built exactly alike, no two students are going to sit exactly the same at the keyboard, but these general directions with a little adjustment here and there will suit all needs.

Assuming the student has had the

first keyboard lesson, and can locate "C" at the left of two black keys with the left hand, and "E" at the right of two black keys with the right hand, we proceed to the next step in technical procedure: hand position.

Balance

The student must learn to balance his arm, hand, and fingers in one piece on the keyboard. Making certain that the student is "sitting light," ask him to drop his left hand at his side in a natural position. Notice that the fingers will be naturally flexed or slightly curved, and the elbow will be pointing out or away from the body. Now direct him to

MJNA Treasurer...



Leland Avery Coon, Chairman of the University of Wisconsin School of Music. He has served as a member of the MTNA Executive Committee since 1946.

place the hand on the keyboard without doing anything to the fingers. Tell him to feel the key with the cushion of the finger tip behind the nail. With this direction he will make all the adjustment needed to fit his fingers to the keys without depressing them. The feeling for lightness, floating and balance in the arm will prevent any depressing. It is wise to remember that the arm from the shoulder to the finger tip is a vital factor in developing finger technic. If the muscles of the upper arm are allowed to sag, they immediately introduce heaviness in the fore-arm and hand, the elbow changes position and points down, the arm becomes weighty, and the keys are depressed. Having placed the hand in position on the keyboard, the student is now directed to pick up his arm, hand, and fingers in one piece, and put it in his lap. Then, he "sits heavy" or relaxes. With these four directions: "sit light," place on keyboard, place in lap, and "sit heavy," timing is introduced into the routine. Later the counts one, two, three, and four may be substituted for the words.

We have arrived now at key sounding. The student can find and name "C" and "E." He must learn how to sound or use these keys. What touch shall he use? Shall it be finger or arm? Shall it be weight or one of the muscular touches?

Strong argument can be propounded for any of these touch approaches, especially for the finger touch since the fingers have to be used actively, or as agents for every note we play, and since practically all methods books are written with the finger approach in mind. Also, a large percentage of piano teachers think of piano technic only as independent finger action, and start even

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ON ORGAN MUSIC

by Klaus Speer

THE great majority of organs throughout the country in the thousands of parochial churches are played by amateurs on this instrument. This situation will always be with us; it is not right or wrong from either the professional or lay viewpoint. However, it is hoped that those who teach the organ will eventually be professional organists in the true sense. The future tense in this last sentence may sound peculiar at first, but a few moments of consideration, especially of the low esteem in which organists find themselves among musicians and discerning listeners, will bring to mind the truth that a great many who make all or part of their living playing and/or teaching the organ are really pianists or singers.

19th Century

Only during the last few decades have we come to understand that the organ as an instrument was not germane to the musical spirit of the nineteenth century among musicians and laymen alike. Such composers as wrote for the organ were either second-rate composers, though perhaps virtuoso players, or their major creative efforts were directed elsewhere. It need not be taken as a mark of disrespect to the organ works of César Franck, Franz Liszt, or Johannes Brahms, to name only a few at random, if one considers them secondary to their symphonies and chamber music compositions. Under the same token it can be understood why so many organs built with the attitude and ideas which were most perfectly expressed by a Wagner-type symphony orchestra

have proved to be unsatisfactory. One need not get into any controversy of Baroque versus Romantic, or Classicist versus Romanticist, or whatever label may be chosen for the real or imaginary opposites, to understand this.

It again expresses no disrespect to the accomplishments of organ builders of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, if we say that the climax of the development of this particular instrument was reached between 1600 and 1750. As parallels we can cite the development of the modern piano-forte which reached its climax somewhere in the middle of the nineteenth century, Messrs. Steinway's later inventions and patents notwithstanding, or the automobile which we can say reached its perfection about ten or fifteen years ago, without by such statement ignoring or belittling automatic shifts or power steering mechanisms.

All this is addressed mostly to the great number of musicians who, understandably, look down upon the organ and its players, and to those organ teachers who put up with this part of their duties as one of the minor compromises that are so often considered necessary when a musician undertakes to teach, and even more when he accepts a position with a church. Not to compromise one's artistic standards is every sincere musician's maxim; and one of the reasons for the deplorable state of church music is that so few high-class musicians will lower their own standards to the extent that would be required if they wanted to hold on to church positions.

The lack of understanding for and interest in the organ and church

music in general during the nineteenth century drove or kept musicians and real music out of the churches. This attitude as concerns willingness and interest on the part of the musicians might well enough have changed during the last few decades, but now the congregations insist on continuance of the trash that has come to be accepted as proper church music.

Compromises

Nobody, this writer certainly included, is in a position to throw the first stone at the musician who makes compromises, since we all do it somewhere, the difference remaining one of degree mostly. It can not always be definitely decided, when we hear or see some cheap music on a program, whether this is due to lack of taste on the part of the musician or of those who pay him. Let us make no mistake; the very best artist, whether he be a creator or a performer or both, earns his living by his skill, not by his integrity or creative genius. The test is this: when we compromise our integrity, do we remain aware of it? Do we continue to strive for ever higher standards, or have we given up the fight somewhere along the way because it seemed so hopeless?

The late Lynwood Farnham no doubt did the most to raise technical standards among professional organists to a level where men like Carl Weinrich or E. Power Biggs *et al* can be mentioned without blushing along with outstanding pianists or conductors. Farnham's untimely death prevented him from continuing the search for great organ music of earlier centuries, and from witnessing the return of interest in the organ as a serious and adult instrument among major composers of the present. But it is especially unfortunate that Farnham did not live long enough to prove beyond a narrow circle of pupils and friends that his infallible technique and his perfectionism as a performer were nothing but means to serve the music itself.

Available Literature

The claim that the literature of great organ music is limited to J. S. Bach and César Franck, that in other words there is not enough literature,

can be found in textbooks for the basic music courses in colleges of fairly recent publication dates. This claim is no longer tenable in view of countless publications of music of earlier centuries and many works of present-day American and European composers, published and unpublished. Composers such as Couperin, Sweelinck, Buxtehude, or Frescobaldi were no more mere precursors of Bach than were Palestrina, Monteverdi, or Schütz. Certainly Hindemith, Krenek, or Messiaen are more than minor successors to César Franck.

The primary need of the present and future teacher of organ is access to the literature written for the instrument which is available in print, in order that both he and his students learn that it is possible to study and play the organ not only technically as well as other musical instruments are played by players of comparable skill, but that there is a wealth of music of many ages on all levels of technical difficulty and musical accessibility.

The attempt was made above to show in a few sentences why the historical periods in which to find this music must needs be other than those from which orchestras and pianists choose the bulk of their repertoire.

Collections

The amateur organist can not well be expected to provide himself with the complete works of all major composers, except perhaps those of J. S. Bach. The customary answer to this problem, the "Collection", is a centuries-old institution, and no specialty of organ music. Neither are editorial irresponsibility in text-critical matters, or an unbalanced sense of values limited to collections for the organist.

Among the countless books a few no doubt can be found with relative musical and editorial merits outweighing their faults. For these lines suffice it to say that the criteria applied in judging a collection of organ music should be the same that the scholar applies when judging any edition, be it one of a play, a novel, the works of one writer or composer, or a collection from various sources.

The development of good taste must, of course, remain the somewhat intangible task of general musical education at all levels. For criticism

of both text and value the student will have to rely on the teacher's word for some time.

Among organists the varying limitation of professional training received will always necessitate reliance on those with the authority of more extensive knowledge. Such authority is dangerous, and its abuse is not the least cause of the low state of affairs in many things cultural. That such matters can not be changed by edict or by legislation is a point of general agreement. This then puts a great deal of responsibility on those who place themselves in a position of authority.

At the danger of restating truths that should be common knowledge among all teachers, it will be attempted to enumerate a few basic

procedural steps that need to be observed whenever we offer advice on literature and teaching material in any form or for any medium.

Basic Steps

Any publication recommended for any reason whatsoever, i.e., reasons of pedagogy, practical application, technical difficulties or lack of same, *et al.*, should be described to some extent, thus giving the reader the benefit of the recommending writer's study of the publication. If the reader is equipped to apply the criteria of judgment by himself, such a description will save him time already expended by another scholar. If the reader is not thus scholastically

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The President's Corner...

John Crowder

AS summer approaches and the school year ends, all of us music teachers will give a sigh of relief when the last student recital is ended. What will we do this summer besides teach the few students who want to continue their work? It is well for us to organize our time, so that we shall be ready to begin the next year.

The first thing that comes to mind is rest. No one needs to feel guilty if one feels lazy at the end of the teaching season. A few days of complete rest will restore one's energy and make one ready to undertake other activities for the summer.

Then comes the pleasant anticipation of a vacation, with the opportunity to meet new people and to renew old acquaintances. A trip, short or long, should definitely be scheduled. It is amazing how happy one feels upon returning home after a trip. Nothing is so refreshing to the spirit as a change of scenery and a change of people. Everyone should plan to go somewhere in order to return home and to the studio with contentment and a new, vigorous, fresh outlook for next year's work.

Most of us will want to read, to study, and to do some things which will result in more effective teaching next season. Many will combine a vacation trip with an opportunity to study either in a summer school or in a private master studio. Many state associations hold workshops and conventions during the summer

months. Plan to attend your state convention. You will have a wonderful time with other music teachers, and the exchange of ideas and experiences will profit you greatly. The teacher who plans a refresher course and who looks for new ideas and inspiration will literally "itch" to get back to the studio and apply the new learning. The teacher who fails to go forward with new ideas is inevitably doomed to go backward with old ideas. A period of study will result in "professional growth", the most important factor in success for any professional person, whether in teaching or in another professional field. Let us all be sure to grow an inch professionally this summer.

The final phase of our summer's planning should relate to preparation for the beginning of the next school year. There is, of course, the problem of organizing the class. It is necessary to give some thought to the organization of materials, the outlining of objectives for each student, and the establishment of mile posts for next year's work in order that progress may be checked and measured at given intervals throughout the year.

With rest, a vacation trip, some study for professional growth to gain new ideas and inspiration, every one of us will have had a pleasant and profitable summer and will be anxious to get into harness again. Let's try it and see.

Choir Directing Problems

by Donald C. Gilley

NO DOUBT choir directors bring a wide variety of preparation and training to their chosen profession. Today sound musicianship is taken for granted, whether it be secured by means of a degree from a good conservatory, or acquired through private study and degrees in the American Guild of Organists. To this most choir directors have added summer study in the fine summer choral schools that are held in various parts of the country. Many are not content with one approach, but have made the rounds of several of these schools seeking the inspiration and training they provide. Most important of all, the voice and especially voice production have been studied. The director may not have a voice himself, although he can sing alto, soprano, tenor, and bass, but he has learned to understand how singing is done, and learned how to help others to sing. This is probably the routine that most choir directors have followed to a greater or lesser degree, and have supplemented it with hard, practical experience of one sort or another.

At this time I am not trying to tell you the only way to direct choirs, but I simply want to share with you the way I handle my choirs.

First, I want to speak about the technical side of choir directing. It is certainly true that choral music, which is a group project, requires certain unique procedures and techniques if the composer's score is to be translated into music. Working with choristers who are both performers and instruments poses a whole set of problems that are different from those of an orchestral conductor. At least the choristers never leave their instruments at home, although they are subject to other hazards. When a director takes in a choir member, he acquires a

personality along with an instrument. Let us consider the problems involved in locating these personalities.

All choir directors are always on the prowl for good voices. Much can be done with poor or fair voices, but more can be done with better voices. Therefore, the search is endless. An organist and choirmaster going to a new position inherits the choir of his predecessor, which gives a basis upon which to build. It then means searching the parish, visiting the schools, making friends with voice teachers, inquiring of friends, interviewing anyone who might be free and able and willing to join the choir, provided they meet the standards. Naturally, it should not mean proselyting from another director's fold.

Minister of Music

Many churches have tried to solve the problem of locating choir members for volunteer choirs by installing a Minister of Music, whose primary duties are to direct a series of graded choirs. The plan usually includes two children's choirs, another group of 12-16 years of age, and then a choir covering the period of 16-21 years, all of these groups channeling into the Adult Choir. The plan has been used with many variations, and with varying degrees of success. Some directors have reacted violently against this set-up as producing poor musical results, and citing other objections as well. As I have observed this plan, and as I have used it myself, I believe the bad results are dependent entirely upon the caliber of the musician who is running the plan. A good choral man will have a good choir, and a man who does not know the business will end up with a poor senior choir no matter if he has twenty junior

choirs feeding into it.

In the college and school situations, the problems of finding people to sing are much simpler. In the usual liberal arts college it means giving the entire freshmen class individual try-outs. I regularly go through about 1100 men each summer to find the 35 I need to replace those who are graduated. In the large university this plan is not possible, but announcements of try-outs will usually bring enough responses. By some means or another, the choral director must get the students into his studio, and hear them sing. Incidentally, I find that about five to eight per cent out of an entire freshmen class are able to meet most standards set up for the choir members.

At chorus try-outs I have the students fill out a questionnaire which gives background and other pertinent data, and then I try the voice. I use the tune "Way Down Upon the Swanee River" as a try-out tune. First, because everyone knows it, and second because of the interval jumps. I use this melody in various keys, and size up the voice while the candidate is singing. I follow this with the tonal group "Do, re, mi, sol, do, re, mi," ascending. I generally start on the B Flat below Middle C. This is revealing in pitch stability and register breaks. One can go on from there with tone clusters to check the ear, and of course reading tests should follow. I classify them as to range and part, and try to size up the personality of the singer. This last is of equal importance in the church choir to musical ability. Sometimes a discreet inquiry from others helps to steer one away from trouble. Anyone who thinks church choir members can not cause trouble has not directed a church choir. College groups are easier here.

In classifying voices as to part I use three checks. First timbre, second location of the break, and third range. A director can not always be absolutely accurate, so he must be on the alert to correct mistakes at a later time. Owing to the fact that voices of young people will vary for a time, the choir director must be careful and must make periodic checks.

Rehearsals

Regarding rehearsals, I shall speak of principles. There are two ways to work: one is just to work, and the other is to work to get something accomplished. We rehearse for something, and the idea is to drive the choir as far along towards performance as possible. I like to start with familiar music, take up something new, return to the familiar, and vary the loud and soft numbers as I would in a program. If the choir contains less than fifty members, it is good to work with individuals in front of the group. The director must work in a kindly manner, and must not make smart remarks at the expense of hurt feelings. There is nothing, however, that snaps a choir to attention so much as individual comment and help, but it takes a skilled conductor to use this method. The choir should be sent home exhausted from good, hard work, giv-

ing them the feeling of having accomplished something. The voices must be guarded, but the singers must be made to use their minds. The director should make heavy demands, being sure that the singers can in some fashion measure up. It is good to rehearse two parts together, using Father Finn's device of putting altos and tenors together, and then sopranos and basses. The piano should be used as little as possible, although some use of the piano is essential for speed in learning. Rehearsal time is not a time for the conductor to show off, but a time to make music. Remarks must be kept as short as possible. The choir must sing as much as it can. Gestures must be informative, and comments must be made along the way. I do not work too long at a time on one number. Rather I plan to bring it into a series of rehearsals for a short period. The conductor must learn to sense when to leave a number. I find that four anthems in fifty minutes is roughly the maximum I can get through. The choir director must know the capabilities of his choir, and choose his music accordingly. He must plan numbers that the choir can do well, for choir members take pride in a job well done.

As for vocalization periods during rehearsals, my experience has been that I used them mostly with boy

choirs and children's choirs generally with adult choirs to relieve long rehearsal periods, and with college age groups when the tone quality began to turn bad. For blending and producing a floating quality in resonant buildings, I like downward vocalization patterns. Explosive consonants can be used to help amateurs feel the correct placing of vowel sounds. Corrective vocalization that is prescribed for a particular problem is most essential at times. I use vocal patterns as follows:

Oo
Oh
Aw
Ah
Ay
Ee

I use every effort to make these vowels sound correct when the choir sings them, and I do not hesitate to walk around the choir and make individual suggestions. The director must set these vowel patterns and must explain the so-called dull and bright vowel sounds so everyone knows what he is speaking about. I make a special effort to set these primary vowels sounds and use all sorts of tonal patterns with them. Naturally I work on breathing methods, support of breath and tone, and I try every device I can think of to make my students conscious of cor-
(Continued on page 23)



CINCINNATI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, CONDUCTED BY THOR JOHNSON

A concert by this top-ranking orchestra has been scheduled as one of the events of the MTNA National Convention, to be held in Cincinnati February 19-22, 1953.

STUDENT NEWS

It is with considerable pride that we inaugurate a new section of **AMERICAN MUSIC TEACHER**, devoted to the Student. It is our expectation that as plans develop and student membership increases, this phase of MTNA's work will become one of our significant con-

tributions to this country's musical growth. No precedents have been established; no one has set any rules — we want this to be a Student undertaking in every sense. Therefore, with unlimited possibilities available, we invite your attention to our students' initial efforts.

FOR A EUROPEAN-AMERICAN MUSIC WORLD

by Stewart Gordon
*Student at University
of Kansas*

THERE was only one American in a class of twenty members. The other students were French, German, Spanish, Hungarian or Italian. The instructor finally turned and looked at the new American girl critically. He motioned for her to present her credentials. On the faces of the others were expressions of tolerance, condescension, and quiet amusement toward an American who wanted to play the piano. The instructor looked up from the papers and told the girl to play.

The girl had played only a few measures when a kind of half bewilderment began to show on the faces of the other students. As musicians they had to admit that she played very well. Of course, this was only *one* composition.

As the months went by, however, this American gained the respect of both the instructor and the students, later becoming one of the teacher's favorite pupils. She was soon regarded as a sensitive and intelligent musician. The students often spoke of their genuine surprise, however, at the fact that an American could be so inately musical.

This story illustrates a concept which was accepted at the beginning of this century, and which is still quite valid as far as the general public is concerned. This concept is that the United States is musically undeveloped, that it has produced little creative talent, and that it must be

nourished musically by whatever Europe has to offer.

This concept, however, is in the process of change. The keen observer realizes that in the last fifty years the United States has emerged as a powerful musical entity, with the potential of wielding considerable power in the future musical world.

We have heard so often that every city of any importance in Europe has a good orchestra, and that in a musical center one may go to a concert nearly every night. This same statement may now be made concerning many of our American cities. Certainly New York is the busiest musical center in the world. An artist who wishes to give a concert must contract for one of the major halls many months in advance.

One can not say that the quality of the music performed in Europe generally is better than that performed in this country. I have heard performance after performance in Europe given by well-known European artists, on a supposedly professional concert level; what I heard would certainly not be tolerated professionally in this country. I am not alone in this observation.

In the field of creation we have been told any number of times that we have not produced any Bach, Beethoven, or Brahms. The logical explanation for this so-called lack is that Beethoven began to compose just a few years after our Declaration of Independence was signed; Chopin died the year of the California gold rush, and Brahms was playing his first concerto during our Civil War. Music is a secondary function

in society. Man must eat, seek shelter, and build some kind of social structure before he is able to express the more aesthetic side of his nature. We will never produce another Beethoven, because he expressed himself by means of a musical style which was conditioned by his own age. However, there is no reason for us not to produce as great a composer as Beethoven who will utilize the means of our own age and our own environment.

The United States has not yet developed an operatic field of any size. There are two leading opera companies in New York, and one in San Francisco. There are other companies; and many departments of music in colleges are now developing opera work shops.

Hausmusik

One of the greatest criticisms of our musical scene is the lack of *Hausmusik* in the United States. *Hausmusik* is easily explained. A few people assemble in a private home. Perhaps one person is a professional musician; the others have various other vocations. Each person either plays an instrument or sings, and each is interested in spending an evening performing chamber music. The performances are not professional, but these people look upon the playing and studying of this kind of music as a special kind of joy. At the present time such activity is almost entirely unknown in the United States. The realization that one can and does receive enjoyment from *Hausmusik* comes to the layman only after a sufficient musical heritage has been established. He must be conscious of this heritage as he grows up, and he learns to love the great masterpieces performed by the greatest artists in the world, but he must also desire to study them by re-creating them himself.

The layman in the United States must learn to regard music as a profession which commands true respect. In Europe the young person who wishes to make music his life

work commands much the same respect as the young person who wishes to become a lawyer or a business man. We respect our musical giants, but often discourage young persons from entering the profession. We fail to realize that in order to produce musicians there must be an army of people who earn a living from music as teachers and instrument makers. Also, there must be an audience to appreciate and like the music performed.

Astrid Varnay, a member of the Metropolitan Opera Company, was invited to sing the part of *Brünnhilde* in a Wagner opera at the 1951 festival in Bayreuth, Germany. Before the performance, several Germans whom I know expressed to me considerable doubt that an American singer could really understand as exacting a role as that of *Brünnhilde*. Miss Varnay sang very beautifully, and after the performance, these same Germans made a point of telling me that Miss Varnay was the greatest *Brünnhilde* that they had ever heard.

This attitude is typical. Whenever an American does something well, most Europeans will gladly applaud him. We Americans, however, having been criticized for so long, promptly show a reaction which, while understandable, is certainly not desirable.

A rapprochement is on the verge of materializing between the music worlds of Europe and the United States. The latter could take its place on the international music scene with dignity and respect, if the American bugaboo of "bigger and better" did not ruin the whole prospect. Americans unfortunately proclaim loudly that not only can they do things well, but that they can do them better than Europe herself. There is nothing that makes the European mind react more violently than this type of boasting. Europeans do admit that materially and economically the United States does lead the world. Europe's only claim to primacy lies in her cultural heritage and her artistic expression. The very fact that Europeans are willing to recognize America's excellence in these things represents a tremendous step in the right direction. This step is not easy for Europeans to make, and our proclamation of the "bigger and better" philosophy at this critical time is very tactless and unjustified. In the first place

we received the basic elements of our culture from Europe, and in the second place we have not yet surpassed Europe in the artistic expressions of our age.

The Future

I am an incurable optimist. I firmly believe that in spite of the tactless outbursts on the part of some, there will be enough American musicians who will have the necessary insight and understanding to grasp the significance of this problem, and bring about the successful completion of the rapprochement which is now possible. There is no reason why the European and American music worlds can not work together with mutual respect to produce the kind of artistic expression which the world needs so desperately.

As for the United States, it is still young. Its musical progress to date has been astounding. I believe that there need be no fear that we will not eventually produce a full-blown, mature culture which will embody the highest artistic expression of a truly American character. Perhaps historians of the future will write, "It was during the latter half of the twentieth century that the United States musically came into its own."

Overtones

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY reports an unusually fine String Clinic held on the Tallahassee campus February 14-16. Albert Spalding and Ernst von Dohnanyi were the leading figures of a faculty of twelve. The Clinic offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to youthful string players to study with two world-famous musicians. There were opportunities for individual and class work; master classes conducted by them provided an opportunity for students to play for criticism and

suggestions, and also a chance for the students to listen to the two artists in performance at close range.

As a result of a conversation with Marcel Cuvelier at the UNESCO Third National Conference in New York in January, at which MTNA was represented by your editor, AMERICAN MUSIC TEACHER is now receiving exchange copies of *CAHIERS J*, a monthly publication of *Jeunesses Musicales de Belgique*. M. Cuvelier is the founder and Director of *Jeunesses Musicales*, a project initiated in 1940 in Brussels to interest young people in Belgium in music, to form their musical taste, to offer them at a reasonable price the symphony concerts which were too often reserved for a privileged few, and to divert them from the grip of Nazi propaganda. Those wishing more information about this outstandingly successful student undertaking should write to the National Executive Office of MTNA.

The School of Music of the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA has solved the problem of how to get its students to attend concerts. The idea originated with Dean Raymond Kendall and his faculty who felt that their music majors were not attending enough concerts and who were sure there was an answer to the student claim that they, the students, did not have enough time and that they could not afford the concerts.

The solution was provided in establishing a class, believed to be the first of its kind in the nation, that gave the student one-half unit of credit per semester, cost of which was paid for by the student. This class was the result of cooperation between USC, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, the Music Guild, Evenings on the Roof and the Harold Byrns Chamber Symphony. As well as insuring the students attending concerts, it also guarantees the sale of a large block of tickets for the programs.

This concert music course is required of all music majors at USC, and is also open as an elective to all USC students, with a special higher ticket rate available to faculty members.

Each student will receive credit if he can pass two quizzes and a final written objective examination on the concerts. When possible, records and scores of numbers to be performed at the concerts are available in the University record library a few days before and after each concert.

An MTNA Student Chapter was formed on April 26 at Kansas University, Lawrence, with fifteen charter members. The initial meeting was most successful, and of particular interest in that the students had the unusual privilege of hearing about the history of MTNA and its meaning from Dr. D. M. Swarthout, who has served as President of MTNA two different times, and was for twenty-three years Secretary of the Association. A round table discussion was held with Jeannette Cass acting as moderator, the speakers being Janet Turk and Mrs. Jan Chiapusso. The subjects treated during the discussion were (1) How to start a private teaching class in a community; (2) How young can children begin piano lessons? (3) How do you keep students interested from lesson to lesson? (4) What price should be charged for lessons? (5) What do you do about missed lessons? Students asked many questions of the speakers, all experienced teachers, and expressed great enthusiasm for the formation of their chapter.

FROM THE STATE ORGANIZATIONS

ARIZONA

by Victor H. Bauman

THE Arizona SMTA recently sponsored a most successful two-day piano workshop in our Central and Southern Districts, with Charlotte DuBois acting as Director. Our piano teachers were most enthusiastic about Miss DuBois and the materials she presented. The first day's events took place at Phoenix College, and included individual audition lessons, a class piano forum, a forum for parents and teachers and a presentation of materials for specified grades. Tucson was the scene of a similar program on the second day.

MONTANA

THE Montana SMTA holds its annual meeting on the campus of the University at Missoula each year, this meeting being sponsored by both the Association and the University. Members are again anticipating the meeting scheduled for this summer. In the hope that such a splendid project will be a source of inspiration to other state associations and individuals, the following excerpts from letters from a few of those who have attended the session in the past are printed:

"For years I have been receiving announcements for this special Music Week program, and finally decided to go to see if it was as wonderful as advertised. It was . . . and I haven't missed a summer since."—L. Fredric Bruggeman, Baker.

"I should have to use superlatives to express my reactions to Montana Music Week. The Master Classes are a great inspiration and incentive for the highest teaching standard. I covet attendance for every teacher in the State and I feel it is a 'must' for piano teachers."—Florence C. Friedlund, Glasgow.

"MSMTA has provided a splendid opportunity for teachers each summer in its Master Class. Personally I feel that it has offered education, inspiration, and pleasure at minimum cost. It is the highlight of the year for me."—Louise Hanger, Kalispell.

"I am looking forward to another week in Missoula this summer. It seems incredible that we in Montana are privileged to have an artist come to us to hold Master Classes (thanks to the Association and the State University). I simply thrill at the joy and inspiration gained from the artist, both as a teacher and a performer, as well as from other Association members. It's a workshop among friends."—Edna Jorgenson, Great Falls.

"I return from these music Institutes so full of new ideas that I can scarcely wait to start the Fall class and put into practice some of the 'new light' that has been shed on an old subject. I would really feel guilty if I purposely passed up an Institute and would feel that I owed my profession an apology."—Lulu Haugen, Wallace, Idaho.

Truman, Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel" presented by the Sweet Sixteen Opera Company, and the yearly feature of the convention, the All-State Student program.

Newly elected officers include Hazel D. Monfort, President; Henry Hobart, Lemuel Childers and Clair R. McGavern, Vice-Presidents; Loraine S. Glosan, Secretary; Julia B. Hunt, Treasurer; and Dr. Carlos Moseley, Parliamentarian.

Dr. Boris Goldovsky had been scheduled to conduct the Piano and Voice Forums, but was unable to attend at the last moment, due to illness. It is distinctly to the credit of OMTA and its personnel that the convention was able to proceed in a wholly satisfactory manner, with both the forums featuring many valuable addresses.

OREGON

by Aurelia P. Stark
and Kay Hicks

THE idea of presenting students with Certificates of Merit for attendance was conceived in 1932 by one of Portland's outstanding musicians and teachers, Martha B. Reynolds. It was thought that by giving the student something tangible, "to have and to hold", for continuous music study in any branch, the teacher would also be benefited. Then, too, a year's music study would mean a uniform length of time. To earn the next certificate is the greatest talking point in encouraging pupils to make up missed

OKLAHOMA

by Clair R. McGavern

THE twenty-first annual convention of the Oklahoma MTA was held March 30-31 in the Mayo Hotel, Tulsa. Interspersed with general sessions were some outstanding concerts, including the Tulsa Philharmonic Orchestra, a presentation of Mozart's youthful operetta "Bastien and Bastienne", a piano recital by Elvina

lessons.

The plan is to start lessons by September 15 and continue through June, allowing a week's vacation at Christmas. Missed lessons must be made up during the season. At the end of the season, those students who have fulfilled the attendance requirements are awarded certificates that carry the name of the State President, the State Secretary, the teacher, the pupil, and that also indicate the year of study. The State Seal is imprinted on the certificate.

After the first year, colored seals or stars are used. The second year shows red under the imprint, third year, silver, then blue, and for the fifth year, gold. That was as far as it was thought necessary to carry out the idea until a boy in Miss Reynold's class did not want to stop collecting certificates, so ribbons were added under the gold seal—white, then red, green and blue. For the tenth year a large legal seal was used with gold ribbons. Eight of these have been given. A business girl had so much pleasure from her music study that she continued for thirteen years. Her certificate showed two colored ribbons.

Four Oregon students have gone beyond the tenth year and this year alone thirty-three have had more than five years of perfect attendance. Altogether, 8750 awards have been given since Oregon MTA adopted this plan.



by Elizabeth B. Smith

TEXAS MTA has recently developed a plan for student membership. Under the special attention of President Archie Jones, this project was adopted by Texas MTA at the Houston Convention in 1951 and is now being put into effect. A Student Affiliate Committee has been appointed, with Mrs. Curtis C. Smith as Chairman.

The plan calls for simple and effective organization, capable of being carried out by busy teachers and students. The Student Affiliate committee in each association is composed of teachers who sponsor student groups, their classes enrolled 100% where possible.

Emphasis is on worthwhile and happy music events planned to deserve the attention and interest of music students. The committee and sponsors are asked to consider local assets, needs, and possibilities, thereby directing a sense of cooperation

SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION

OFFICERS ASSISTING HAZEL D. MONFORT, PRESIDENT

and responsibility toward the musical growth of the community.

The large group of student members will strengthen the position of the private teacher, and will bring about a closer and more helpful relation between the individual teacher and Texas MTA.



by Lillian James

A MOST profitable and stimulating convention was recently held by the Wisconsin MTA in Eau Claire, at the State College. This was the association's forty-first annual meeting. The three day program opened with an organ recital; other musical events included a symphony concert, several piano and voice recitals, and a choral program.

The new officers are Lillian Jorgensen James, President; Kenneth Byler, Vice-President; Robert Gantner, Secretary; Harold Fiske, Treasurer.



Dr. H. Grady Harlan, Secretary. He is well known for his capable editing of the **SOUTHWESTERN MUSICIAN**.



Hugh M. Miller, Vice-President. He heads the Department of Music of the University of New Mexico.



Mrs. C. J. Giroir, Treasurer. She is immediate past-president of Arkansas MTA.

Have You Heard

that—

Roy Underwood, immediate past president of MTNA and Head of the Music Department at Michigan State College, will be honored by his Alma Mater, Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas, with an honorary Mus. D. degree, on June 2. On June 12, he will be similarly honored by Chicago Musical College.

that—

Announcement has been made by United Temple Chorus of the Ernest Bloch Award competition for the best work for Women's Chorus based on a text taken from, or related to the Old Testament. The award consists of a prize of one hundred and fifty dollars and publication by Mercury Music Corporation. Judges will be Norman Dello Joio, Milton Feist, Isadore Freed and Frederick Jacobi. The deadline date for compositions is October 15, 1952. Rules may be secured by writing to United Temple Chorus, The Ernest Bloch Award, Box 18, Hewlett, Long Island, New York.

that—

Exactly 125 towns of less than 25,000 population have their own symphony orchestras. New York State small towns have 14 symphonies; Pennsylvania, 13; California 9; Massachusetts, 8. In five towns of less than 3,000 inhabitants, college people and towns people join to give the community an orchestra of their own. The total number of orchestras in the United States is 691, says the American Symphony Orchestra League. Last year the number was 659.

that—

Edward Johnson, former director of the

Metropolitan Opera is now Chancellor at Chicago Musical College. Rudolph Ganz has been appointed as President.

that—

The Friends of Harvey Gaul, Inc., of Pittsburgh, announces the sixth annual nation-wide composition contest under the auspices of that organization. A prize of \$400.00 is offered for the best lyric drama (one-act opera), a story set to music with action for solo voices and chorus, in one or more scenes not to exceed one hour, with piano accompaniment or any combination of instruments. There is also a prize of \$100.00 offered by Mrs. Albert Keister for the best composition for two harps. Compositions must be submitted on or before December 1, 1952. For complete rules, write to Friends of Harvey Gaul Contest, Victor Saudek, Chairman, 315 Shady Avenue, Pittsburgh 6, Pennsylvania.

that—

The 1952 National String Festival had a highly-succesful meeting March 29-31 at the Barbizon Plaza Hotel in New York City. Under the Honorary Chairmanship of Dimitri Mitropoulos and General Chairmanship of Bela Urban, those attending were provided with an exceptionally good program. Working with the chairmen were Louis Persinger, Samuel Gardner, Ernest Harris, Blanche Levy, Moshe Paranov, and George Bornoff. On display was an exhibit of rare instruments and manuscripts. Chamber music programs featured everything from top professional to the little "Gum-Drop Quartets". Discussions of methods, parent-teacher sessions, contemporary music programs, a string orchestra of five hundred children and a Youth Artist Festival were some of the memorable events. The Convention was presented under the auspices of the Violin, Viola, and Violoncello Teachers Guild, the Na-

tional Orchestral Association, and the Hartt College of Music.

that—

There is a bill pending in Congress that provides for the postponement of income tax. In connection with Bill H.R. 4373, Leland Coon, MTNA Treasurer, submitted the following resolution to the MTNA Executive Committee at the Dallas Convention:

WHEREAS, the private music teachers of this country and many of those employed by conservatories are not adequately protected under the present Social Security laws;

THE MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, in convention assembled, endorses Bill H.R. 4373 "to permit the postponement of income tax with respect to a portion of earned net income paid to a restricted retirement fund."

IF THIS BILL becomes law, the President of the MTNA is hereby authorized to appoint a committee to study and make recommendations for a suitable pension plan which would be available to those members who would desire to utilize it.

This resolution was approved by the Executive Committee. Members wishing to support this bill should write Representatives Eugene J. Keogh (D.-N.Y.) and Chauncey W. Reed (R.-Ill.) or Senator Irving M. Ives (R.-N. Y.).

EDITORIAL

(Continued from second cover)

petitioned for such affiliation.

AMERICAN MUSIC TEACHER was established, the first issue appearing just one year ago, in May 1951. Forty - eight - thousand-five-hundred copies of AMERICAN MUSIC TEACHER have been printed and distributed. Supplies of all back issues have been depleted, with the exception of the July 1951 issue. A few copies of this are available at fifty cents a copy.

Letters to the editor of AMERICAN MUSIC TEACHER have on rare occasions expressed some slight personal disagreement with some of the statements contained in the articles, but the general consensus of the letter writers is that each issue of AMERICAN MUSIC TEACHER is better than the previous one.

In February 1952 MTNA published *Doctoral Dissertations in Musicology*. The sale of this publication has been greater than anticipated.

Student chapters of MTNA have been founded recently in a number of institutions of higher education. A chairman in charge of student membership has been appointed, and this chairman immediately jumped

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into the campaign with ideas and plans for action that will certainly bring the music students into the MTNA by droves.

In February of this year MTNA held in Dallas, Texas, one of the most successful conferences of its entire career. Enough credit for the success of this conference can never be given to the local committee, and to all others who contributed their services. This conference set a standard for all future conferences. Judging by the activity of the local chairman for the 1953 MTNA conference in Cincinnati, Ohio, the Dallas people will need to look to their laurels. The Junior Piano Forum has requested three sessions for 1953. In Dallas they were granted two sessions, but they feel that their need is so great that more sessions are necessary. One state association has already spoken of chartering a special train to take care of its members who want to go to Cincinnati in February 1953.

All this has been done by individuals, not by some mythological creature known as an Association, but by you of MTNA working together for the common good, many times at your own expense. No one person can be given credit for all that has been accomplished. Credit must be given to many people, but especially must it be given to you people who saw that work had to be done, and pitched in and did it.

So much for the pat on the back. What are the plans for the future?

The 1953 convention to be held in Cincinnati, Ohio, February 19-22 has already been mentioned. With hard work it will be, like all American things, bigger and better than ever.

Tentative plans call for a slightly larger AMERICAN MUSIC TEACHER, with the addition of permanent sections devoted to areas of special interest.

Membership in MTNA should reach at least ten-thousand for the membership year 1952-53.

Five more state associations should be formed under the aegis of MTNA.

Plans are under way for the formation of two more divisions.

As the Association grows in numbers, it is hoped that MTNA can subsidize research projects, and publish the findings of such projects.

Right now a search is being conducted for larger quarters for the national headquarters. Nothing definite can be reported at this time.

Through hard work, sound planning, and the foresight of you individual members, MTNA has reached its present position. Through continued hard work, intelligent planning, and perceptive foresight of the individuals working together, MTNA can reach its present goals, find itself in an even more advantageous position of power and authority in the musical life of this country, and then discover new goals on higher ground for which to strive. There is no ceiling on the future of the Music Teachers National Association!

CASS

(Continued from page 1)

lems that their classes in pedagogy do not cover (such as the administration part of setting up a private piano or voice class in a community). Others are interested in things quite different. It is our feeling that each chapter will follow its own interests and needs—in no case is there a desire on the part of MTNA to dictate. Those chapters formed within private studios will obviously follow a program different from the collegiate groups. Here is an opportunity for schools and private teachers to provide supplementary musical training and experience to their students that has national identity and scope.

MTNA does not plan to stop with these two aspects of student participation. It also plans to include its

students in its National Convention program, by scheduling student meetings as a part of the official events. It is our expectation that many future music teachers will begin their professional contacts by attending conventions as delegates to the Student Section.

It is our aim to make our organization serve our students in a constructive manner that will enrich their musical experiences and aid those who are planning to enter the music profession. From polls and questionnaires that have been submitted for student reaction, we know there is a need for this service, and judging by the serious and dignified manner in which the students have expressed their ideas, we know we can expect mature and gratifying results.

The question of minimum age requirements for Student Membership has arisen, and for the present, we have set the minimum at sixteen, unless a teacher feels that a student, though younger, is sufficiently mature to derive benefit from such membership. Naturally, there is no maximum age limit. We feel that we are not at present geared to provide a suitable publication program for younger students.

We know that all MTNA members will be interested in this project and will lend active support to it by encouraging their students to join now and form chapters as soon as possible. It is hoped that teachers will

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encourage their students to write articles concerning their musical experiences and interests. The articles are to be submitted to Jeannette Cass, 1211 Oread, Lawrence, Kansas, so that selection may be made of material suitable for publication in *AMERICAN MUSIC TEACHER*. The Student Membership Committee and I will also welcome ideas and suggestions as to what the students would care to have included in their section of the magazine. Only by the students themselves expressing their desires can we best serve them.

The Association has purposely made Student Membership dues as low as possible so that the opportunity for membership will be available to all. Yearly dues are \$1.00. Benefits to be derived include the privilege of attending all divisional and national conventions upon payment of the registration fee, and receipt of all five issues of *AMERICAN MUSIC TEACHER*. Word has reached us that many students planning on becoming members for 1952-53 would like to obtain a copy of this present issue of *AMERICAN MUSIC*

TEACHER, with the hope of forming chapters before the present school year closes. Accordingly, special arrangements have been made whereby all who wish to do this, thus having a copy of the issue which inaugurates our plan, may do so by sending in dues now of \$1.25, these dues to be applied to regular 1952-53 membership but providing a copy of this present issue. It is our plan to send membership cards and magazines in bulk to chapters that are established. Members who do not belong to a chapter will be mailed material individually. All dues, individual and collective in cases of chapters, are to be sent to: S. Turner Jones, Executive Secretary, MTNA, 17 West 71st Street, New York 23, N. Y.

All those wishing to organize chapters either in colleges, conservatories or private studios may obtain information from: Jeannette Cass, MTNA Student Membership Chairman, 1211 Oread, Lawrence, Kansas.



CAZDEN

(Continued from page 3)

that they are, at least in appearance, inherently illogical, inconsistent, and incomplete at any given moment, as compared with some abstract ideal. When it is observed that the concept of a non-harmonic tone in traditional harmony is a piece of sheer nonsense, let us imagine ourselves trying to impress on others the reasonableness of spelling in the English language. Both difficulties have the same origin, namely that real languages and real musical systems alike are the outgrowths of their histories in given cultural settings. Their structures are thus not logical, but psychological and above all social in their roots. Theirs is a logic of reality, and they stem from usage and not from some theoretical set of postulates, however perfect.

We can explain the peculiarities of English spelling by tracing the historical course of pronunciations, the continued interaction of regional variants and dialects, the crystallization of forms following upon the spread of the printed word, the absorption of local practices into modern national standards. Similarly, we can explain the operation of recent European tonal harmony by tracing the indigenous folk usages of diatonic patterns, of triadic forma-

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tions, of dance rhythms, of text accents, and their impact through contrapuntal practices in the specialized ruling art forms. The result may be equally lacking in ultimate rigor of the rules, for much of the record is missing, and both verbal language and musical system are growing, living modes of the social process, which process can not be complete until human beings and their history come to an end.

Historically developed systems may therefore appear faulty and imperfect as compared with synthetic ones, whose logic relies less on human frailties. But they have these inestimable advantages, that they are currently in use, that they convey meanings, and that they can be understood. We are familiar with the "proven" abstract superiority of Esperanto and similar constructed languages over the poor local jargons we speak, but we think and speak in our habitual ways, because they are imbedded in our history, and possess treasures of literature, idiomatic values and ranges of connotation that can not be translated effectively.

Yet even in terms of logic and self-consistency, it by no means follows that a synthetic musical system, following well-conceived theoretical principles, is apt to be in any sense more suitable for creative expression than a system that has just "grown". Our experience with the best formulated of musical Esperantos shows, in fact, that they bear within them inherent limitations that rob them of precisely that expanded range of artistic potential which they are designed to provide. Compared to what is available in the traditional diatonic tonal system, which the

prophets of the new declare to be exhausted, the synthetic musical languages suffer certain fundamental omissions, so that they serve to inhibit and restrict that very imaginative variety which they were meant to ensure.

Hindemith

Thus Hindemith's schematic gradation of "harmonic tension" quite casually eliminates the identifying modal qualities of major and minor. It substitutes an innocuous gradualness of dynamic for the strong oppositions of tonic and dominant centers, of active dissonance resolving to stable consonant moments, of metrical and syncopated accents. The use of symmetrical frameworks in various synthetic systems, such as an equal twelve-tone division of the octave, or a six-tone division (whole-tone scale), or a twenty-four-tone division (quarter-tone scale), involves important losses of orientation in listening, reminding us that the less sophisticated diatonic irregularities make possible a continuous reference to fixed points in the melodic range. Mechanical equalization of intervals reduces their number and their subtlety, as chord inversions become the same as their transpositions, and the perfectly logical constructions succeed in obliterating the variety obtained from enharmonic changes and shifts of intonation. Atonality and polytonality alike sacrifice the expressive power of modulation. The expanded, complex harmonies that include every degree of the scale may be momentarily interesting and colorful, but they have no contrasting harmonies to which they may proceed. Real se-

quences, real inversions, real imitations, real crab-forms, exactly in proportion to their seeming logic on paper, are singularly unconvincing to the ear because of the thwarting of a framework for identifying the motives. Thus the very theoretical reasonings which are set out to make a synthetic language logical and consistent have the result of making them narrow, limiting, and incomplete for the purposes of artistic expression, as compared with the lowly traditional practices which have "merely" evolved out of social needs and human experience.

On further thought it is natural that such be the case. For the synthetic system, however brilliant its inventor, has no roots other than doctrine, and the doctrine that denies the primary historical setting of music as an activity of real human beings is by that token incomplete, faulty, and sterile. We may suggest that those contemporary composers who have refused to adhere to any pre-conceived set of rules have succeeded in their creative writing to a degree far more in accord with their potential than have their doctrinaire colleagues. The superhuman insight into the truly revealed music of the future, which the system-builders loudly claim, may well prove in reality to be a form of near-sightedness, a failure to envision the full human relevance of the art of music. The logical systems that seem so far beyond time and space as to attract a very few superior souls as their disciples may turn out to be rather dated after all, and significant merely as the reflection of certain very mundane conditions of spiritual discomfort, as home-made nostrums for the frustrated intellectuals of the nine-

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teen-twenties.

By the term "folk idioms" we do not by any means refer to the rather superficial practice of uplifting or exploiting traditional melodies to provide exotic flavorings for Romantic masterpieces. We know today that what passed for folksongs in the symphonic elaborations of Liszt and Dvorák and Tchaikovsky were but picture-postcard caricatures served up to sated tourists in the metropolitan cafés. The cheap imitations of local color that tickled the nineteenth century virtuoso composers were as little true to life as a Hollywood portrayal of a stereotyped journalist learning about the problems of Iranian peasants in the bar of a first-class American hotel in Paris.

Actual impregnation of the high art forms with the real national idioms of a people has been notably rare in the last century. For folk idioms are not simply, or even primarily, a set of tunes garnered in the course of a self-conscious collection of holiday-costume curios. They are the sum of the forms and meanings underlying these tunes, they are the living and current conversational modes of musical practice as these are engendered during the history of a people. They are the patterns of thought, the usages, the earthy associations fixed in the common vocabulary of music of a given nation. Folk idioms do not lend themselves well to pretense, they are not mere condiments to be sprinkled on the surface of academic concert-pieces, and the lush chromatic harmonies of the Viennese court ball and the Berlin beer-hall will not contain them, even if the result be labeled Spanish or Oriental. Folk idioms are the whole manner of speech peculiar to a people, embodying its history and its daily life, its common heritage and its common experience.

The composer who employs a folk idiom, or rather who does not inhibit it or despise it or deny his own national heritage, need never fear for an audience, need not pose before his audience, need not perspire over roundabout ways of saying his piece. The people of a nation have always recognized their own, and the people of other nations have always recognized the truth. If J. S. Bach, and Haydn, and Mozart, and Beethoven, and Verdi, and Moussorgsky could afford to cast their art in straight-

forward, popular forms stamped with their native locale and era, the composers of today need not seek vainly for some ultra-highbrow ordering of secret symbols to preserve an illusory, cosmopolitan purity of form. For in the art of music, form and meaning are fused into one, and a set of synthetic formal elements, deliberately contrived to avoid all imprints of historical, human reference, becomes thereby not only empty of meaning and conviction, but ultimately irrational and worthless in form as well.

The language proper to the composer already exists all around him, it is spoken by his friends and neighbors. Instead of running away from it, he need only learn to speak his own language well, and do some thinking about what he has to say.

KRONGARD

(Continued from page 4)

prise the total membership of these organizations. Most of these people have spent their lives in private teaching, improving in it, and improving it. A study of their qualifications will show that they have backgrounds of the highest caliber. They hold degrees from the finest universities and professional music schools. Many of them are, or were, concert artists. Among them will be found the composers whose educational products nurture the children of the nation. Some are members of the faculties of the local universities and professional music schools in addition to being private teachers. More significant, however, is the fact that they have rounded out initial training with day-to-day experiences in the field of private teaching, becoming aware, at first hand, of the requirements of getting students, teaching students, and holding students. They have improved themselves according to their needs as indicated by their teaching experiences, taking unheralded part in workshops, conferences, seminars, organizational activities, by taking courses in the schools, by taking private work—in short, by doing everything on their own to adapt themselves to their calling. Thus, I can not too strongly express my belief that the basic agency, and the only one really qualified to do the job of certifying the private teacher is the

private teacher himself, for he is the only authority in this field.

The Interstate Music Teachers Council has been at work on the project of certification for over two years. It has arrived at its findings by extensive study of plans of other states, by consultation with many eminent teachers and musicians, and by getting advice from many of the members of its constituent organizations. To these data it has applied a philosophy of its own which it feels is in keeping with modern educational principles, and which it hopes will pertain to the function of the private teacher as described above. The Council's work has received the endorsement of the music department of Teachers College, Columbia University, of the Department of Education of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, and of Mr. William Schuman, President of the Juilliard School of Music.

The Council recognizes that there are various areas in music teaching and has set up requirements, differing, not in degree, but in kind for each area. The areas which have been considered are: the child specialist, the general music teacher, and the artist teacher.

The Council has considered three levels of teacher standing: (1) the candidate with proper training, but with no experience, will be awarded a Provisional Certificate, good for

five years. (2) The Certificate of Experience will be awarded upon the presentation of evidence of successful teaching experience. This will be based principally on an examination of the teacher's product, the student. A comprehensive demonstration in which students of the candidate will be examined in performance, functional skills, musical background, and will be tested to determine whether music study has conferred cultural, social, or emotional benefits upon him will be required. (3) The third certificate, as yet unnamed, will be given for evidence of outstanding self-improvement, and/or a distinctive contribution to the field of music education.

Preparation

The Council does not agree with the widely accepted premise that instrumental skill and musical knowledge automatically confer upon their possessors the training, ability, or privilege to teach. While in no way minimizing the need for the most thorough kind of musical training, the Council feels that the music teacher's preparation should be comparable to the preparation of teachers of other subjects; that educational psychology, general principles of teaching, practice teaching, and the like, form a necessary and vital part of any teacher's equipment. As the phrase "music teacher" consists of two words, the Council hopes that its plan will give genuine meaning to each of them.

Upon acceptance of the plan by its constituent organizations, the Council will be empowered by them to engage examiners and judges, and to issue certificates in the collective name of its organization to the candidates who meet its requirements. A widespread publicity campaign directed at the private teacher's employing public, the parent, will go along with the setting up of the plan. This is the only compulsive feature about it; when the public has learned to demand certification of its music teachers, the first long step in the direction of giving it the protection it needs, and the teacher who is qualified the status he deserves, will have been taken.

While the Council would like an immediate improvement in private music teaching conditions, it well knows that this can not and will not

happen. It looks forward to the future in building its plan. To use a happy phrase from Dr. Raymond Burrows, "Those who are living should go on living." Accordingly the Council has made provisions for those already in the field to qualify under conditions which meet their needs.

It is apparent from this bare outline of Council organization, strength, and procedure of work that the highest level of scholarship, sponsorship, and sincerity have been committed to this project. The Council hopes that it will meet the need for

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a change in the basic area of musical instruction we call private teaching, and that it will be a model for other groups seeking a solution for this costly problem.

BINKLEY

(Continued from page 5)

the earliest beginner with that approach. However, if the student is told or taught to use his fingers either independently or interdependently in this first approach to key sounding, he is actually being led away from normal technical principles. This is the root of one of the most common sources of technical

difficulty, i.e., the student begins by concentrating on finger work and later is introduced to the idea of arm and body assistance. He is asked to control his fingers on the keyboard before he can balance and control his arm on the keyboard. He is asked to play with independent fingers before he can balance the arm and hand on any one finger or on any group of fingers, which results in bad tone quality and unmusical playing.

"Sitting light" with the hand on the keyboard, each finger feeling the key with the cushion of the finger tip behind the nail, and with the third finger covering "C," suddenly the support or balance in the arm and hand lets go long enough to carry the key down to key bottom, and the weight of the arm with the assistance of the body sounds the key. The result is a full, resonant, singing tone. Simultaneous with the sounding of the key, or making the tone, the feeling for lightness or floating returns to the arm and hand allowing the key to come up, the hand still in position on the keyboard, no keys depressed, perfect balance in the arm. Since the tone was approached from the key tops, no aiming was needed. There is no finger movement or breaking of the arm at the elbow or wrist. This is called "whole arm up touch." It can be qualified by either staying on or leaving the key depending on the needs of the music. If the phrasing touch is needed, or the arm staccato is called for, the hand and arm will leave the key and suspend itself in the air for the duration indicated. In this first lesson all the student is asked to do is to find, name, and sound "C" with the third finger of the left hand. Therefore, after this has been accomplished, the hand would leave the keyboard and return to the lap where it rests as in the hand position exercise.

The next step will be to repeat the entire routine using the right hand, third finger covering "E." When the student can sound the keys using the third finger, with ease and in time, other fingers should be used until the

student can balance the arm and hand on any finger. Later the exercise is extended through one, two, three, and four octaves, using arms alternately, sometimes reversing the order, beginning with the right hand instead of the left, the students always finding, naming, and sounding the keys simultaneously.

This simple, first drill or exercise in touch and tone production is followed by playing two keys consecutively, i.e., C, D; E, F; and so forth, with the second and third, third and fourth, and first and second fingers used inter-dependently (rotatively), and later extended through groups of three, four, and finally five keys when all the fingers will be used. Arm and hand should work alternately so that each side of the playing mechanism will be developed equally well, always extending the exercise through two, three, and four octaves according to the ability of the student in order to develop agility and endurance.

SPEER

(Continued from page 7)

equipped, such a report will do its bit toward giving him some such equipment.

One of the first questions to be asked and answered by the reporter must therefore be, "Was the publication which I am about to review edited by its composer? If not, did the editor in a preface give an account of his editorial activities?" While a reviewer may often not be in the position to check on the reliability of a non-annotated edition, his readers should at least be informed of the status of the edition in this respect.

Editing is some times necessary for practical purposes, but the player is entitled to know how much and in what aspects the edition differs from its source. For example, does the editor offer in modern notation what is preserved in tablature? Does he present music in three-stave notation which was originally written or printed on two staves? Were dy-

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namic markings, registration suggestions, or fingerings added? Even such respected editions as those of J. S. Bach's organ works by Griepenkerl with C. F. Peters, or by the Bach-Gesellschaft with Breitkopf have been remiss on such points.

For example, in the first American edition of Bach's *Orgelbüchlein* edited by Albert Riemenschneider, published by Oliver Ditson, the English title given to the volume is *The Liturgical Year*. In his preface to the work Riemenschneider explains his reason for his use of the particular title. These reasons can be appreciated, with either approval or disapproval, in their pedagogical intentions at the time of publication.

Too little was then known about the composer's own pedagogical and practical ideas when he planned the *Little Organ Book* (this translation preserves the implications of the original title) to contain organ chorales on all the major chorales sung at his time throughout the Church Year. Riemenschneider's edition contains, in addition to the notes of Bach's organ chorales in their original order, a considerable amount of material, such as fingerings, four-part choral settings of the chorales, interpretative remarks, and reports on the practices of previous scholars and players. It holds on to the myth of the inverted mordent which, it must be inserted to Riemenschneider's credit, he recognized as unfounded in his later years. Crossbars are changed in countless places to indicate the editor's conception of musical phrases. If a reviewer prefers this edition of Bach's work to others available on the market, his reasons for such preference should be presented in detail, and the reader should also be informed of its few serious shortcomings.

French Editions

The comparative degree of standardization of organ specification and nomenclature in France have enabled French composers for some two-hundred-fifty years to indicate their registration wishes in their manuscripts and first prints. If an American edition of such music is reviewed or recommended, the reader should be informed whether it contains explanatory remarks concerning these indications of stops beyond translations of the stop names from French

to English. If a French edition is reviewed, a word of caution about the impracticability of such translation would be in place. Those of his readers who are not in need of such cautioning are more likely to appreciate it than to resent it.

Some criteria have been described which must be applied to any and all works or editions reviewed or recommended, in addition to the simple facts of publication. Since it has been assumed that such reviews will be primarily for the large number of comparative amateurs among organists the following two points might also be covered to great advantage, though the reviewer can hardly remain as objective as in those previously treated: (1) comparative grade of technical difficulty, which is a very relative matter and can perhaps best be covered by comparison with some standard work like individual organ chorales from Bach's *Little Organ Book*, or the *Eight Short Preludes and Fugues* by the same master; (2) length of compositions, and their consequent relative usefulness for church services.

We come to the much more difficult second major point of evaluation for which the relative amateur organist must rely on the authority of a few professionals who write, or whose programs for church or concert he may have a chance to see or hear: that of the musical value of a composition. No objective list of criteria such as was attempted above for text criticism can here be given. Nevertheless, the saying, "*De gustibus non disputandum*," is generally either a bad excuse for lack of taste on the part of the person who says it, or it implies frustration resulting from the need to do things for the sake of making a living, which we would prefer not to do.

There are a few procedures which the reviewer who wishes to avoid hermeneutics, or the language of the writer of program notes or of newspaper reviews, can follow. These procedures would need to differ a bit for new works of living composers and publications of works of earlier times. In any case it seems advisable to call in some musician who is professionally familiar with music for other instruments, or combinations of instruments, from the same period. It need not be requested that such a musician be named by the reviewer, since it does not matter whether he

is known to the reader or not. This procedure is recommended mainly as one of safety and one that will help the organist keep his sense of values for music for his instrument balanced among those in all other media. The comparison which this consultant will make is one of the best criteria also for the reviewer himself. If, for instance, we thus compare much of Johann Gottfried Walther's output with that of J. S. Bach, we shall no doubt find Walther a bit academic and less inspired, but never cheap. If we compare a chorus of Sir John Stainer's with one from *A German Requiem* by Brahms, we find the same harmonies, effects, and so forth, but in the first case unmistakably used as clichés, where the master was able to avoid the danger of sounding cheap.

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poser. In fact skill as a composer and improviser were once the main points of judgment which the authorities applied when employing a new musician. With the separation of performer and composer in all fields of music came the phenomenon, both in church and concert hall, of old and accepted music outbalancing new music in quantity.

The church, and especially the school, needs to regain recognition of the creator as the most important person among musicians rather than the executor.

Musicians and listeners alike need to be exposed to as much good music in contemporary idioms as can be found. Since it usually takes some time for a judgment of values to be just and fair, a good deal of new music will need to be performed and heard for a while before it either enters the ranks of really highly regarded compositions, or drops out as a product of passing value only.

Since all who are concerned with the publication of new music must be willing to take some chances, it is fair to ask the same of the reviewer. He will have to recommend, or condemn, on the responsibility of his own taste without much possibility of argument about it.

The most felicitous results for the reader with whom this paper is concerned can be obtained if several reviewers try to give expression to their opinions on currently new organ music independently of each other.

When presenting a composer who is a general newcomer, not only in the organ music field, a few informative facts about his background, pro-

fessional training, and so forth, would not be amiss, if such information is at all apt to assist the composition to achieve its proper degree of appreciation.

This writer has spent considerable time and effort in the interpretation of contemporary music, both published and from manuscript. Still he confesses to being suspicious when reading one or more names of composers and/or compositions with no indications as to their identity. This suspicion is not due to conservative reluctance toward the new; it is caused by the countless "numbers" found in so many collections (usually of the teardrop variety) which were probably the results of some organist's or harmony teacher's endeavors, and which should never have left his own studio or music rack.

Transcriptions

Finally a few words must be set down about transcriptions. It seems that this generation could appropriately stand to pass on to its students what might at some later date perhaps be called extreme purism. True, Bach transcribed profusely both his own works and those of others. Comparisons of endeavors of some of our illustrious contemporaries, transcribing organ music for orchestra, and vice versa, with those of Bach are much out of place for two reasons: (1) Bach lived and worked in the center of a long development. In early polyphony all music was conceived to be sung, but expected to be executed in any way practicable, i.e., by ensembles of

voices and instruments, or even solo keyboard instruments. In the nineteenth century tone color and medium for which music was written became all-important. (2) Who today may justly presume to place himself in J. S. Bach's position in any manner or form?

The first of these two statements itself points out the main modification which any purist must accept; none of our instruments are those used by the composers before 1850 approximately. We are transcribing when we play J. S. Bach's or Haydn's music on the piano-forte or on most of our organs. The maxim to which we might best reduce this writer's precepts on this point would be this: only a musician with a thorough knowledge and understanding of the style of composition and performance of a period should dare to undertake transcriptions. Here again most of us lack this equipment, and since consequently we must rely on scholars for the decisions and actual work, extreme caution on the part of the editor of a transcription is required. He must report on every detail of his work, and also present reasons for what he has done. The best sample of this type of scholarship in the service of the music and of those prospective performers who must trust an editor is the work of Arthur Mendel in his editions such as that of the *Christmas Historia* by Heinrich Schütz, or the *Passion According to St. John* by J. S. Bach, both published by G. Schirmer.

The reference to piano scores of choral works brings about our conclusion by including a medium that is bound to play a large part in every organist's obligations: so-called accompaniments. Piano scores of cantata movements with orchestrations that could not with a clear musical conscience be transcribed for one keyboard instrument need nevertheless to be issued for various study purposes; but their editors must caution the untrained player that such purposes are their only excuse for existence. In short, here as everywhere, the editor needs to be a scholar who puts his knowledge at the disposal of the practical musician, and the writer who reviews music and editions for the less tutored organist and teacher owes it to his readers to inform them of the scholastic state of an edition of old music and of the musical value of new compositions in relation to all

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serious contemporary music.

As an almost inevitable result of these lines the writer must declare himself willing to offer the criticism he has expressed as desirable for such publications as are at his disposal.

GILLEY

(Continued from page 9)

rect vocal procedures. I have had better luck with the LaForge vocal patterns or series of vocal exercises than with any other, but it is not important who devises the plan. The important thing is to have some good way at hand and to use it as deemed necessary.

When it comes to diction there are many ways of helping a choir. I still stay with the Smallman-Wilcox principles that appear in their book "The Art of A Cappella Singing." Here, the various mutations of vowel sounds are related to the list of vowels that I used above in vocalization, and the words in any composition may be analyzed to show exactly what the vowel sounds are. The idea of starting a vowel sound with a consonant, ending it with a consonant, but keeping the vowel clean in between is nicely shown in the text book. Choir members seem to find this the easiest way to grasp the principles of good diction. I find here that some methods are a bit complicated, and some of the phonetic spellings used by some publishers are rather difficult for the choir to grasp. To help in analyzing what vowel sounds to use I resort to the blackboard. Each word is taken apart, and the vowel sounds are related to the primary sounds used in the vocalization plan. I have the students try singing just the vowel sounds without the consonants. This concentrates attention on what the vowel sounds are and how they feel. Then the choir is asked to go through and form all consonant sounds. After a few sessions of this sort the choir is sensitive to word sounds.

Diphthongs come next. They are simple for the group to understand. I handle three vowel sounds as they arise, and I try not to confuse people with too elaborate a diagnosis. There is nothing that will ruin the tone quality of a choir any faster than the cross-up of bad diphthong sounds.

Closely allied with the above two

subjects is that of intonation. Choirs will, in spite of everything that can be done, sing out of tune on some occasions. There are many reasons for this. If the conductor recognizes some of the reasons, he can eliminate them. Fatigue, faulty breathing, bad acoustics, inability to hear other sections, poor music, bad keys, hot rooms, fright, carelessness, poor ears, any one of these will cause a choir to sound out of tune. Is it any wonder they will do it? The best insurance is good vocal production and a sensitive ear. I eliminate all the mechanical hazards possible, and do not ask for continued fortissimo singing, or continued pianissimo tone. If I have any members who have a tendency to sing flat, I get them apart, and work individually with them. If it comes from a poor ear, the chorister must be eliminated. It is surprising how one bad voice will ruin a section. Poor interval measuring will sometimes wreck a choir, and it does not harm to try to pinch the descending intervals, and expand the ascending ones. It is up to the conductor to check his choir in rehearsal when this fault shows up, and not let the group get in the habit of dropping in pitch.

The alert director becomes aware, as he listens to his choir sing, that this or that singer has a particular vocal fault. One may not breathe correctly. Another may use too much breath in producing the tone. Another may have a stiff jaw, and so forth. As these faults are observed, suggestions for correcting them can be made. A while ago I mentioned vocal training as a necessity for the choral conductor. Here is where he uses this training. His skill in diagnosing these faults and in prescribing remedies for them will go a long way towards improving his choir. There is no substitute for good training in voice, and all choir directors ought to have it.

I like a choir whose members have studied with various teachers. The plan of having every choir member study with the choirmaster has its limitations. One of the choirs that I enjoyed directing most, from a vocal standpoint, was a conservatory choir, which was made up of voice students from many teachers. The final result was rich and good. Where one man does it all, the virtues and faults of the conductor stand out too much.

Aimless singing through a number never gets results. When the director stops a group to repeat a section of a composition, he must explain why he is repeating, and what he expects them to work for. In this way progress is made. There is a nice balance between correcting and worrying a choir. The director must sense where this point is.

There is much in common between the church choir, boy choir, college concert choir, high school choir, and oratorio groups. Their problems and conditions of performance are different, but each goes through the same learning and polishing process. In the final analysis it depends on the choral conductor's will to do a fine job.

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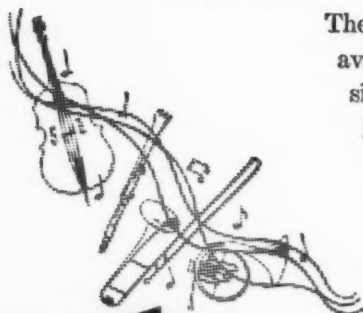


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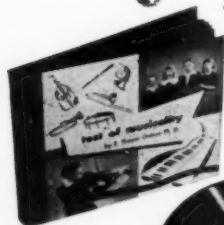
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